

PATENT COOPERATION TREATY

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INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY REPORT ON PATENTABILITY
(Chapter II of the Patent Cooperation Treaty)

(PCT Article 36 and Rule 70)

Applicant's or agent's file reference OP100850SKI	FOR FURTHER ACTION See Form PCT/IPEA/416	
International application No. PCT/FI2004/000614	International filing date (day/month/year) 15.10.2004	Priority date (day/month/year) 15.10.2003
International Patent Classification (IPC) or national classification and IPC A23J 1/20, A23J 3/08, A23J 3/16		
Applicant Uniq Bioresearch OY et al		

1. This report is the international preliminary examination report, established by this International Preliminary Examining Authority under Article 35 and transmitted to the applicant according to Article 36.

2. This REPORT consists of a total of 3 sheets, including this cover sheet.

3. This report is also accompanied by ANNEXES, comprising:

a. (*sent to the applicant and to the International Bureau*) a total of 3 sheets, as follows:

sheets of the description, claims and/or drawings which have been amended and are the basis of this report and/or sheets containing rectifications authorized by this Authority (see Rule 70.16 and Section 607 of the Administrative Instructions).

sheets which supersede earlier sheets, but which this Authority considers contain an amendment that goes beyond the disclosure in the international application as filed, as indicated in item 4 of Box No. I and the Supplemental Box.

b. (*sent to the International Bureau only*) a total of (indicate type and number of electronic carrier(s))
, containing a sequence listing and/or tables related thereto, in electronic form only, as indicated in the Supplemental Box Relating to Sequence Listing (see Section 802 of the Administrative Instructions).

4. This report contains indications relating to the following items:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Box No. I	Basis of the report
<input type="checkbox"/>	Box No. II	Priority
<input type="checkbox"/>	Box No. III	Non-establishment of opinion with regard to novelty, inventive step and industrial applicability
<input type="checkbox"/>	Box No. IV	Lack of unity of invention
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Box No. V	Reasoned statement under Article 35(2) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement
<input type="checkbox"/>	Box No. VI	Certain documents cited
<input type="checkbox"/>	Box No. VII	Certain defects in the international application
<input type="checkbox"/>	Box No. VIII	Certain observations on the international application

Date of submission of the demand 27.10.2005	Date of completion of this report 14.10.2005
Name and mailing address of the IPEA/SE Posten och registreringsverket Box 5055 S-102 42 STOCKHOLM Phone No. +46 8 667 72 88	Authorized officer Inger Löfgren/Els Telephone No. +46 8 782 25 00

INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY REPORT ON PATENTABILITY

International application No.

PCT/FI2004/000614

Box No. I Basis of the report

1. With regard to the language, this report is based on:

the international application in the language in which it was filed
 a translation of the international application into _____
 which is the language of a translation furnished for the purposes of:
 international search (Rules 12.3(a) and 23.1(b))
 publication of the international application (Rule 12.4(a))
 international preliminary examination (Rules 55.2(a) and/or 55.3(a))

2. With regard to the elements of the international application, this report is based on (replacement sheets which have been furnished to the receiving Office in response to an invitation under Article 14 are referred to in this report as "originally filed" and are not annexed to this report):

the international application as originally filed/furnished

the description:

pages 1 - 29 as originally filed/furnished

pages* _____ received by this Authority on _____

pages* _____ received by this Authority on _____

the claims:

pages _____ as originally filed/furnished

pages* _____ as amended (together with any statement) under Article 19

pages* 30 - 32 received by this Authority on 27 - 07 - 2005

pages* _____ received by this Authority on _____

the drawings:

pages 1 - 3 as originally filed/furnished

pages* _____ received by this Authority on _____

pages* _____ received by this Authority on _____

a sequence listing and/or any related table(s) – see Supplemental Box Relating to Sequence Listing.

3. The amendments have resulted in the cancellation of:

the description, pages _____

the claims, Nos. _____

the drawings, sheets/figs _____

the sequence listing (specify): _____

any table(s) related to the sequence listing (specify): _____

4.

This report has been established as if (some of) the amendments annexed to this report and listed below had not been made, since they have been considered to go beyond the disclosure as filed, as indicated in the Supplemental Box (Rule 70.2(c)).

the description, pages _____

the claims, Nos. _____

the drawings, sheets/figs _____

the sequence listing (specify): _____

any table(s) related to the sequence listing (specify): _____

* If item 4 applies, some or all of those sheets may be marked "superseded."

INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY REPORT ON PATENTABILITY

International application No.

PCT/FI2004/000614

Box No. V **Reasoned statement under Article 35(2) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement**

1. Statement

Novelty (N)	Claims	<u>1-20</u>	YES
	Claims	_____	NO
Inventive step (IS)	Claims	<u>1-20</u>	YES
	Claims	_____	NO
Industrial applicability (IA)	Claims	<u>1-20</u>	YES
	Claims	_____	NO

2. Citations and explanations (Rule 70.7)

Cited document:

D1: WO9955170, (page 9, line 9-33)

D1 shows a method for modifying the structure of whey proteins. Sulfitolysis of the disulfide bond of the protein results in two sulfhydryl groups. The sulfhydryl groups are then oxidized with air oxygen or with another oxidizing agent and heated so that new disulfide bonds are formed. The end product has functional properties such as dispersability, emulsification and gelation according to the degree of modification.

The claimed invention, according to claim 1, 8, 11 and 18 differs from D1 in that the heating proceeds for less than 15 minutes. Nothing is said about reaction time in D1.

The heat treatment, according to the invention, is considerably shorter than what is traditionally used. A skilled person working in the field of food industry would not have used such a short heat treatment to strengthen the structure of the protein. The claimed invention therefore is not considered to be obvious. Accordingly the claimed invention involves an inventive step. The invention, according to claims 1-20 is also considered to be industrially applicable.

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Claims

1. A method for strengthening the structure during a pasteurization heat treatment of said

5 between the proteins to form a protein space method comprises

– adding modified protein to said product before it is modified by cleaving at least one disulfide bond originally present in said protein to obtain free sulphydryl groups, and

10 – heating said product for 15 minutes or less to cause an interchange reaction by said free sulphydryl groups to form said structure strengthening disulfide bridges between proteins.

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2. The method of claim 1, characterized in that said heating time is 15 seconds to 14 minutes, preferably 1–10 minutes, more preferably 1–3 minutes.

15 3. The method of claim 1 or 2, characterized in that said heating temperature is 70–85 °C, preferably 70–80 °C, more preferably 72–75 °C.

20 4. The method of any of the preceding claims, characterized in that said protein has been modified by contacting it with sulfite ion forming reagent, such as alkali metal or earth alkali metal sulfite, hydrogen sulfite or metabisulfite or combinations thereof, to sulfonate said protein.

25 5. The method of any of the preceding claims, characterized in that the amount of free sulphydryl groups in the total protein of the product before the interchange modification is 0.5–60 µmol/g protein, preferably 5–20 µmol/g protein.

30 6. The method of any of the preceding claims, characterized in that said modified protein comprises whey protein or soy protein.

7. The method of any of the preceding claims, characterized in that said food product is yoghurt, pudding, spread, other milk product, dough, animal fodder or pet food.

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8. A method for preparing a protein-containing food product having protective functional properties, characterized in that the method comprises

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— adding modified protein to said product, which protein is modified by cleaving at least one disulfide bond originally present in said protein to obtain free sulphydryl groups, and

5 — heating said product for 15 minutes or less to cause an interchange reaction by said free sulphydryl groups to further cleave other disulfide bridges between proteins to obtain free sulphydryl groups providing said functional properties.

9. The method of claim 8, **characterized** in that said heating time is 15 seconds to 14 minutes, preferably 1–10 minutes, more preferably 1–3 minutes.

10 10. The method of claim 8 or 9, **characterized** in that said heating temperature is 70–85 °C, preferably 70–80 °C, more preferably 72–75 °C.

15 11. A protein-containing food product comprising a protein space network strengthening the structure of said product, which network is formed in a pasteurization heat treatment by disulfide bonds between proteins, **characterized** in that said protein network has been created by adding modified protein to the product before said heat treatment, which protein is modified by cleaving at least one disulfide bond originally present in said protein to obtain free sulphydryl groups which have 20 formed said structure strengthening disulfide bonds in an interchange reaction during a heating of 15 minutes or less.

25 12. The protein-containing product of claim 11, **characterized** in that said heating time is 15 seconds to 14 minutes, preferably 1–10 minutes, more preferably 1–3 minutes.

13. The protein-containing product of claim 11 or 12, **characterized** in that said heating temperature is 70–85 °C, preferably 70–80 °C, more preferably 72–75 °C.

30 14. The protein-containing product of any of the claims 11–13, **characterized** in that said protein has been modified by contacting it with sulfite ion forming reagent, such as alkali metal or earth alkali metal sulfite, hydrogen sulfite or metabisulfite or combinations thereof, to sulfonate said protein.

35 15. The protein-containing product of any of the claims 11–14, **characterized** in that the amount of free sulphydryl groups in the total protein of the product before the interchange modification is 0.5–60 µmol/g protein.

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16. The protein-containing product of any of the claims 11–15, characterized in that said modified protein comprises whey protein or soy protein.
- 5 17. The protein-containing product of any of the claims 11–16, characterized in that said food product is yoghurt, pudding, spread, other milk product, dough, animal fodder or pet food.
- 10 18. A protein-containing food product having protective functional properties, characterized in that said product comprises free sulphydryl groups created by adding modified protein to the product before pasteurization heat treatment, which protein is modified by cleaving at least one disulfide bond originally present in said protein, to obtain free sulphydryl groups to further cleave other disulfide bonds between proteins during a heating of 15 minutes or less to obtain free sulphydryl groups providing said functional properties.
- 15 19. The protein-containing product of claim 11, characterized in that said heating time is 15 seconds to 14 minutes, preferably 1–10 minutes, more preferably 1–3 minutes.
- 20 20. The protein-containing product of claim 11 or 12, characterized in that said heating temperature is 70–85 °C, preferably 70–80 °C, more preferably 72–75 °C.